

## RESEARCHING YOUR HISTORIC BUILDING



## A GUIDE TO INFORMATION RESOURCES

*For more information:*

City of Columbus  
Department of Development  
Neighborhood Services Division  
Historic Preservation Office  
109 N. Front St., Ground Floor  
Columbus, OH 43215  
645-8040

12/2002



City of Columbus  
Michael B. Coleman, Mayor  
Department of Development  
Mark Barbash, Director

## RESEARCHING THE HISTORY OF A BUILDING

If walls could talk, they would reveal the history of a building's construction, additions, and renovations, as well as the daily events and special occasions that have occurred there over time. Some reasons for researching the history of a building include:

- Documenting the history of a building for local or state surveys, nomination to a local register such as the Columbus Register of Historic Properties, or nomination to the National Register of Historic Places.
- Interpreting the history of a building for a house museum.
- Providing information about the physical history of a building for a restoration that will accurately reflect its history.
- Providing a link to the people and events historically connected with the building.

## RESEARCH MATERIALS

### TITLE DEEDS

Research the title, or deed, of a property to determine the history of ownership of the land. The deed may or may not mention buildings associated with the property.

### TAX APPRAISAL RECORDS

Compare annual property tax appraisal records, noting large increases in value which may indicate that a building was constructed or altered during that period.

### ORAL HISTORIES

Interview former owners and older neighborhood residents.

### DIRECTORIES

Annual city and county directories provide the names, addresses, and occupations of owners and occupants of both commercial and residential buildings.

### NEWSPAPERS

Old newspapers may provide obituaries, business advertisements for commercial buildings, real estate transactions, household auction bills, or articles about the construction of a building.

### MAPS

Buildings, property lines, and roads may be found on a variety of maps including county atlases, city maps, plat maps, birds-eye-view maps (<http://lcweb2.loc.gov/ammem/pmhtml/panhome.html>), United States Geological Survey Maps, and Sanborn Fire Insurance maps (<http://edrnet.com/sanborn.htm>).

### PHOTOGRAPHS, POSTCARDS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

Personal snapshots taken by former property owners or photographs found in books or on postcards can provide information about original paint colors, additions, and alterations to the building over time.

### COUNTY HISTORIES

County history books often include biographies of residents and businesspersons as well as drawings of prominent farms and dwellings.

### CENSUS RECORDS

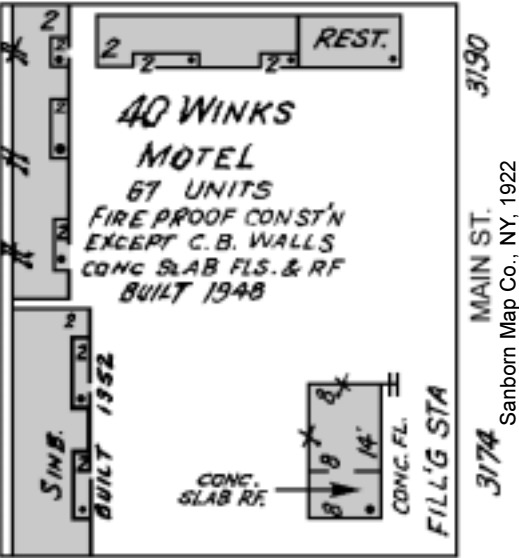
Census records may provide information such as the value of real and personal property and the name, occupation, and birthplace of all occupants of a dwelling.

GUIDE TO SOURCES

Some of the archives located in the city of Columbus and a partial listing of their current sources are listed below. Call individual repositories for complete listings.

STATE LIBRARY OF OHIO  
Jeffrey Mining Corporate Center  
274 East First Avenue  
Columbus, OH 43201  
(614) 644-6966  
<http://winslo.state.oh.us>

- County Atlases
- County Histories
- Community Histories
- City and County Directories
- Birth and Death Lisitngs
- Census Records
- Cemetery Records
- Family Histories
- Military Sources



Insurance maps of Columbus, OH



Columbus City Directory, 1890-91

COLUMBUS METROPOLITAN LIBRARY  
Main Library  
Biography, History, and Travel  
96 South Grant Avenue, Third Floor  
Columbus, OH 43215  
(614) 645-2710  
<http://www.columbuslibrary.org>

- Slides and Photographs (for on-line photos, click on Databases and Links, CML Databases, Buildings and Historic Photographs, or Central Ohio Buildings)
- Plat Books
- Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps
- City Directories
- Neighborhood Scrapbook
- Newspapers
- County Atlases
- Community Histories



OHIO HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
Archives/Library  
1982 Velma Avenue, Third Floor  
Columbus, OH 43211-2497  
(614) 297-2510  
<http://ohiohistory.org>

- County Histories
- City and County Directories
- Photographs/Postcards
- Family Histories
- Birth and Death Records
- Census Records
- City and County Maps and Atlases
- Newspapers



Columbus City Directory, 1906-07

THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY  
Main Library  
1858 Neil Avenue Mall  
Columbus, OH 43210-1286  
(614) 292-3900  
<http://www.lib.ohio-state.edu>

- Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps
- Newspapers
- U.S.G.S Maps
- County Atlases
- County Histories
- Community Histories
- City Directories



FRANKLIN COUNTY COURT HOUSE  
373 South High Street  
Columbus, OH 43215

FRANKLIN COUNTY RECORDER  
18<sup>th</sup> Floor  
(614) 462-3930  
• Deed Records  
• Mortgage Records

FRANKLIN COUNTY AUDITOR  
20<sup>th</sup> Floor  
(614) 462-4663  
<http://www.co.franklin.oh.us/auditor>  
• Real Estate Tax Appraisal Records

FRANKLIN COUNTY PROBATE COURT  
22<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
(614) 462-3894  
• Wills  
• Birth and Death Records  
• Estate/Inventory Records  
• Marriage Records